

# News Release

**For Immediate Release:**  
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## **DOMINION MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS GRADUATE FROM T.A.P.S.!**

Dozens of teens who participated in an 11-week Teens And Police Service Academy (T.A.P.S.) are getting recognized for their hard work and dedication to the Department of Public Safety program.

On Thursday, May 25, 2017 at 9:30a.m., Assistant Director Robert Stewart along with members and instructors of the Columbus Division of Police will be graduating teens from Dominion Middle School located at 330 Dominion Boulevard.

The TAPS program was designed to reduce the social distance between youth and law enforcement by inspiring alternate ways of looking at situations and promoting positive decision making. They were instructed in a variety of topics including avoiding drugs, gang life, and anger management combined with a strong anti-bullying message. The honest interaction between the involved youth and Columbus Police Officers occurs through sincere, straight-forward dialogue and the sharing of thoughts, opinions and life experiences. In addition, the graduates received training in how to properly and safely interact with law enforcement officers and were provided information on how to combat alcohol and drug abuse from Columbus Public Health.

Vice Principal Steven Browne Jr. remarked “The T.A.P.S. program has been a very positive interaction with police as mentors with our students. There was skepticism by the students at onset of the program, but the cultural attitudes of our students have changed and you will see hugs between the two at the graduation ceremony.”

Ned Pettus Jr., PhD, Director of Columbus Department of Public Safety said “This partnership with our court system, Columbus City Schools, Columbus Public Health and the Columbus Division of Police is an important asset in our neighborhoods. I am proud of the graduates of this program for their participation and the skills they take away from the Academy. This is an important next step in relationship building in our diverse community.”

This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> T.A.P.S. graduation in 2017. The first occurred on Monday, May 22 at Champion Middle School. The T.A.P.S. Academy program is funded by a grant from the Franklin County Juvenile Court.

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